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ABSTRACT

One in a series of resources for community groups, this paper provides a theoretical model of community development and relates it to the history, needs, and characteristics of native communities. The introductory section discusses the philosophy and goals of the series, which promotes the development of "core groups"--small community groups that will discuss the possibilities of individual and community transformation. It is suggested that a facilitator help the group go through the text together with frequent discussion of the points that are made. Sections 1 and 2 define community and community development. Emphasis is placed on individuals learning about themselves and their communities and taking charge of their own lives. The bulk of the paper is devoted to a model of community development with human spiritual development at the hub encircled by 12 elements essential to the process of community development. Brief descriptions are provided for each element: tension, involvement of key individuals in deliberations about the current situation, networking with resources and allies, personal revitalization experiences, constructing a vision, core group experiences, making plans and goals, building community organization, building unity between hearts and minds, learning, taking action, and evaluation. (JHZ)

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The Four Worlds Development Project is the result of many people's efforts and wisdom. Some were directly involved, others inspired us through their work in education and alcohol and drug abuse prevention.

Direction for this project was set at a conference held in Lethbridge, Alberta in December, 1982. Participants at the conference were native elders, spiritual leaders and professionals of various native communities in North America. Their contributions were framed by their deep commitment to native people and their own, often hard won, experience. To each of them we offer our deepest respect and appreciation.

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Rose Yellow Feet

Editorial note:

In English it is impossible to refer to a person without using a pronoun that indicates gender or sex (e.g. he or she, him or her, his or hers). Since there is no special word to refer to a person whose gender is not known, most writers have chosen to use the masculine form in these situations.

This custom of using the masculine form when referring to a person who is not known to be a female, has caused a conspicuous absence of reference to women in English writing.

Thus all of the great ideas and discoveries discussed in English literature are expressed in masculine terms and the reader constantly visualizes males, rather than females, as active participators in the world. Our society's tendency to devalue the role and contributions of women is only augmented by this lack of picturing women in an active creative role.

The Four Worlds Development Project has chosen to alternate the use of feminine and masculine pronouns whenever the reference is unspecific. This choice of usage is a deliberate one to avoid the the awkwardness of the compound form (he/she; him or her) while at the same time acknowledging the harmful consequences of bowing to a convention that persistently forces its audience to visualize the world as dominated by men and operating on ideas expressed in masculine terms.

Introduction

This series of discussion papers has been especially designed for small community groups; we call these "core groups". Our aim is that as people learn more about themselves and their community, they will want to get involved in creating new options, new patterns of personal and community dynamics, and in short, in promoting the ongoing process of human development in themselves and their community.

The core of anything is the heart and center of that thing. The core of a human development process is the people who, by their unity of vision, their personal commitment to growth and their leadership (by example) form the pattern around which other people cluster as positive changes take place in the community.

The Four Worlds Project promotes the development of core groups which will engage in discussion on the possibility of individual and community transformation, and conduct action-oriented research on aspects of personal and community life. It is anticipated that this group will, in some sense, establish new structural patterns around which the life of the community can organize itself--patterns that are more life-preserving, life-enhancing and development-promoting than those currently being utilized.

The core group, as it gains clarity of vision and takes action on that vision, will attract others who will also participate in the learning-transformation process. The fundamental strategic problem is not whether core groups can have such an influence. That they can is an established fact in a wide variety of case studies on social change. The challenge is twofold. The first problem is to tease out of obscurity and isolation in any community of learners those individuals who are in some way already facilitators of the organic change process in the community. The second task is to unite the hearts of these individuals in a common vision of human possibility that transcends social and political barriers to positive understanding and collaboration.

It is with the goal of helping individuals and communities face these two challenges that this discussion series was prepared. Accept them as your own and use them in whatever way you feel will be appropriate and effective.

We envision a process in which a group facilitator helps the group go through the text together, stopping frequently to discuss the points that are made. The activities and discussion questions can be used to help review what has been learned, to explore some aspects of the discussion more fully, and to apply what you have learned to your own situation and community. Much of the material can be read aloud (either by the facilitator or by various members of the

study group in turn) so that people are not limited by their reading ability in their efforts to understand the material. We anticipate that a natural outcome of this discussion process will be that the group will decide to take action in the community.

This series is just an experiment. It is not meant to be a final product. Let us know what you think, what you liked and what you didn't, and what helped you learn and what didn't. During the next year we hope to develop a set of video tapes to go with the series and maybe produce some more discussion papers to develop some of the ideas further. We need you to help us make this project a success.

"Behold, the living centre of a nation I shall give you, and with it many you shall save." And I saw that he was holding in in his hand a bright red stick that was alive, and as I looked it sprouted at the top and sent forth branches, and on the branches many leaves came out and murmured and in the leaves the birds began to sing. And then for just a little while I thought I saw beneath it in the shade the circled village of people and every living thing with roots or legs or wings, and all were happy. "It shall stand in the centre of the nation's circle," said Grandfather, "a cane to work with and a people's heart; and by your powers you shall make it blossom."

Black Elk (Lakota)

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In Discussion Paper Five we heard the elders call for a "great learning enterprise" that would transform Native communities. They said that education must be a human development process that would heal both individuals and the communities in which they live. They said that the root causes of alcohol and drug abuse must be eliminated.

In order for this to happen, each individual must have the opportunity to develop her potential as a physical, mental, emotional and spiritual being. Each individual must also learn to use her volition (or will). As well as the individual receiving an education that allows her to develop her volition and her potential in each of these four areas, the community in which she lives must also be strong and healthy. People cannot grow and develop in isolation. They are strongly affected by the world around them.

This discussion paper will look at the processes that help communities grow, develop, and become healthy places for the people in them.

What is Community Development?

In order to better understand what community development is, it will help to consider the idea of "community" and the idea of "development" separately.

1. Community

A community is a group of people living together in roughly the same geographical location. But just as a family is more than just people who live in the same household, so a community is much more than people sharing a settlement or town or reservation together.

The community is also the relationships the people have with each other. These relationships may be understood in various categories. Among these are:

- Economic relationships: how people make a living together, and how they distribute resources among themselves.
- Political relationships: how people decide things together, and how they relate as a group to the outside world. Inherent in political relationships is the sharing or distribution of power.
- Social and Cultural relationships: how people act on and understand the world. Every culture is a unique way of being in the world. Just as individuals have their own styles or "personalities", so each group of people have their unique way (style) of thinking, speaking and acting together in the world. And just as individual personalities can change somewhat as people grow and have experiences, so a people's way of being in

the world with each other (their society and their culture) changes.

A Community then, is people who (in most cases) live together in a particular locality and who have on-going political, socio-cultural and economic relationships with each other. Their relationships can be good or bad, just as the relationships within one family can be good or bad.

If there is a lack of unity, if a few people control everything, or if people are not working together to improve life for everyone, then that community can't live up to its full potential. Helping a community to live up to its potential is what "community development" work is all about.

We have been talking about the concept of "community". Let's now turn to the idea of development.

2. Development

Development is a gradual process through which something grows and becomes what it potentially can become.

A seed planted in the ground grows and becomes a tiny plant. As the plant receives energy from the sun, the earth and rain, it grows until it is a great tree. That transformation process from seed to tree is a kind of "development"; a natural unfolding of potential.

A human infant is born helpless and dependent on its mother for love, food and protection. But through a process of growth the child becomes a man or woman capable of great things. She who was once a helpless infant can speak, think, invent, love and forgive. That gradual change process from infant to adult is a kind of "development".

So What is Community Development?

Communities also can "develop". Much of what Native communities could become has not yet appeared in reality. There is great energy, for example, in the power of unity that has not yet been tapped to improve the economic well-being of Native people. Many communities are reduced to depending on the government for money, direction and technical help in order to accomplish anything. Other communities have grown out of that dependency stage and are far more self-reliant and independent than they were.

That growth process from a weak, dependent, colonized position of relative helplessness, a condition that gives rise to many social problems including alcohol and drug abuse, and which was created despite courageous resistance by Native people to outside forces, to one of a community deciding for itself how it wants to change and what steps will be taken to bring about overall community improvement is also "development".

It is assumed by many that very little remains of traditional Indian ideology and philosophy because the traditional Indian life-style is no longer in evidence; that is, we don't live in tepees anymore. This assumption holds that traditional values and beliefs changed when our life-styles changed. Implicit in this assumption, also, is the notion that Indian culture must remain static to remain Indian. But the history of our people is a history of successful adaptation to change...

Marie Smallface Marule (Blood)

Many people misunderstand us when we talk about wanting to live the life of our ancestors. They think that we want to go back in time and live in our tepees, to be in our Indian costumes all year round, and to get away from what we have today. Indian people today want to maintain those traditions that they are able to. Our dance, song, language, arts, and crafts are the kinds of things that our people want to continue practising and showing their younger people. But at the same time we want our young people to do the kinds of things that they feel are going to help their people develop their communities and fulfill their desires. Today many of our young people are taking advantage of the things that are being made available to them in the larger society. They are not satisfied any longer simply to follow the white man. Nor do they want to dominate. Instead they are insisting on walking together as equals with those who have dominated us. They want to be able to have the same benefits. They have a lot to offer and there are many instances where we can help one another.

Chief Earl Old Person (Blackfeet)

A community development process can lead to better health care, better education for everyone, higher income, or more specific goals such as a new community hall or a successful crafts co-operative. It almost always involves an improvement of the communication and decision-making apparatus in the community.

And it always involves people learning things they didn't know before about themselves, about their community or about technical matters important to the further growth of the community. Learning is the main goal of community development because it generates new human potential.

Community development is people taking charge of their own futures. It is people identifying commonly felt problems and needs, and taking steps to resolve the problems and meet the needs. It is people struggling to make their community a better place to live out their lives than it ever was before.

> We have a chance to shape our institutions so they will conform to our traditional philosophies and ideologies and to adapt these to contemporary times so they will be as useful as they were previously to our community. But it is essential that Indians insist on traditional institutions, systems, and processes as the framework for any discussion of Indian government. Our traditional philosophies and ideologies are absolutely vital to our future. They must be clarified to give our people a real alternative.
>
> Marie Smallface Marule (Blood)

The Community Development Process

The following diagram (figure I) shows the twelve primary elements that comprise the process of community development. They are displayed in a circle with no particulur ranking or order, because it is possible to enter the process through any one of these doorways. Once the cycle is entered, all of the components shown become issues, areas of concerns, or simply stages in the process.

Note that the core of human development is spiritual, and is rooted in the heart of culture. Form that core flows the vision of human possibility and the values to promote and preserve human well-being. That "core" is not easily described in models. It is fluid and illusive. It is the cohesive force that holds the wheel of life together; that prevents the components of the process of development from flying off in every different direction as the wheel spins. It is love and sacrifice, tribal protocol, and unity.

All aspects of the development process are rooted in this core, and have their connections to the rest of the process through it. Unless the core is nurtured, there can be no human development.

What follows is a brief desciption of each of the twelve components:

Figure I

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1. Tension

An awareness develops on the part of key members of the community that there is a deficiency in the way things are. This awareness grows out of the understanding that a condition other than the current one is even possible. For instance, in many Native communities, housing is substandard, overcrowded, and in short supply. People who lived on reserves have only to drive to town to see that everybody does not live in dilapidated, overcrowded conditions. Perhaps for a long time Native people simply assumed that they are poor because they are Native and "that's the way it is." Then one day some of the band members visit another reserve where a new subdivision has recently gone in. The awareness dawns that the way things are is not the way they have to be.

For change to occur, this tension must exist. Indeed, in every living system there exists a "necessary tension" between conservative or consolidating forces which work to institutionalize and make permanent the good ideals and discoveries which make life as it is lived possible, and the innovative forces which seek to introduce change into the system.

Traditionally, Native people knew that both of these forces needed to be balanced into one dynamic if the people were to remain healthy and strong, but also adaptive to

ever-changing environmental conditions. Many tribes went so far as to "institutionalize" both processes, in order that they could be protected and properly blended. The process of articulating this tension can sometimes require the help of outside facilitators.

2. Involvement of Key Individuals in Deliberations about the Current Situation

In any given community there are certain individuals who are key to the ongoing process of personal and community transformation. Some of these may be high profile members of boards or councils, while others may be quite invisible to the uninitiated observer. Whoever they are, these people are leaders of thought and action around whom other people cluster. Without the support (even if it is not spoken) of these key individuals, very little occurs in the community. It is primarily they who must be invited to name the game, that is to define what the situation actually is that is to be transformed. It is they who must feel this "tension" if initial movement is to take place. Someone needs to systematically identify some of these key individuals (they will identify each other as well) and find a way to engage them in the community development process.

The process of consulting together on the nature of life as it is now being lived, seeking to identify problems and possible solutions, and gradually evolving commitment to

change is vital throughout the duration of any development process.

Often this type of discussion will go on informally in people's homes. Eventually it will take in a significant number of people in the community. Gradually, the conversation of the community will change. As people begin to realize the possibility of transforming the pattern of their lives for the betterment of everybody, they will increasingly imporve their ability to completely articulate what their situation is, and how it might be changed.

3. Networking with Resources and Allies

The initiators of community development processes are often a small, struggling minority within a community, or even within one or several community programs. The simple act of connecting these people and their struggle to others outside the process who can provide support, information, ideas, and possibly money, and who can as well act as a backstop if local efforts begin to break down, can multiply by many times the power and effectiveness of an emerging community development process.

Being allied with organizations, or projects within or from outside the community in other communities in a development network has many advantages. Some of these include:

a) a broader power basis for getting funding is created;

b) legitimation (that is, getting the idea accepted by those who must accept it) within the communities so that people know that what is being attempted has been done elsewhere.

c) access to valuable information that will assist the project;

d) access to valuable human resources skilled at guiding various aspects of the process;

e) a sense of solidarity, i.e. of being a part of a movement (this feeling of connectedness is in itself empowering);

f) having allies to stand beside when what you are doing is attacked (which, if you are successful, is almost inevitable).

Warning: There is no living process that can substain itself without input from the outside. In development, the role of "outside experts", money, and ideas is crucial, but can also cause problems. While it is true that outsiders to the process can provide valuable services, it is also true that there is a great danger they will take over the process, thus robbing people of their ability to develop. This loss of the capacity for self-development is the stepchild of a dependent relationship. The critical key to this successful use of outside resources of all kinds (people, money, plans and ideas, and even vision or hope) is that insiders must control the use of these resources and redefine their meaning and importance in terms of the community's own process. In other words, ownership and control of the development process should never be given over in exchange for needed inputs.

On the other hand, the notion that "we don't need anyone" is also imbalanced. A tree needs sunlight, warmth, water, and nourishment to grow. But it needs these things on its own terms. That is, it needs a specific quantity of water, not too much, not too little. Too much sunshine will dry the tree out. Soil that is too rich in nutrients will poison the tree. People and their communities are similar in that they need inputs to aid these development, but they need them on their own terms. Nowhere is the need for participation more critically felt than in the delicate task of establishing a partnership with some agency or resource outside the community to aid the development process.

4. Personal Revitalization Experiences

As Roberts put it,

> to equate community development with the knowledge, control, and development of one's environment, without taking into account the need for self-knowledge, self-control, and self-development, is to deprive community development of an important element. The development of the community involves the development of the individuals, of their personal insights, and of their understanding of who they are. (Roberts 1979:37)

Every successful community development process is also a personal development process for the participants. It involves experiences, whether intentionally planned or spontaneous, which help individuals to discover new possibilities for themselves and which help them to re-interpret the history of their relationships with other

community memebers and to understand these relationships in new ways.

Often workshops which treat self-development, communication skills, coping skills, and decision-making skills are helpful. For many Native people, strong cultural experiences, either through workshops or ceremonies, have proven to be extremely meaningful. Most often, someone needs to plan and guide these experiences. They do not usually "happen" without considerable planning and efforts, however invisible those plans and efforts may be. The orchestration of such experiences is an aspect of the total community development process that might easily be overlooked unless someone (or a core group) who understands their importance undertakes to insure that they occur.

5. Constructing a Vision

While it would be simplistic to say that visions "are made, not born," it is important to realize that an individual or a community will not be gifted with a vision of what is possible until a considerable price is payed. (Traditionally Native people fasted, prayed, shed tears and pledged themselves to difficult ordeals in order to obtain a vision. There is no such thing as a "free" vision.)

In order for real growth or transformation to take place, human beings need a vision or what they could become.

This vision must also give some inkling of:

a) how things used to be;

b) how things got to be the way they are now;

c) what the current situation or condition is;

d) what steps are needed to enter into a new way of being that would be more desireable then the current one.

The process of articulating a vision and putting it out for people to interact with is critical to the development process. The people who are the subject of the development process (i.e. those whose well-being is to be improved by it) must be the primary participants in the task of constructing a new vision.

Outside facilitators can often be very helpful at key stages of this process, as can connection with representatives of successful community projects from other places. Guiding and nurturing the process of vision construction and articulation is a delicate activity, especially since vision itself is always changing, like an horizon renews itself and changes as one approaches it.

<u>The Process of constructing and articulating vision never stops as long as the process of community developemnt is underway.</u>

6. Core Group Development

The core of anything is the heart and center of that thing. The core of a human development process is the people who, by their unity of vision, their personal commitment to growth, and their leadership (often by example) form the pattern around which people cluster as positive changes take place in the community.

It is highly unlikely that the community will arise all at once to undertake a general change process. Usually what happens is that small, special interest groups can be motivated to work together for the resolution of issues that personally touch the members of that group. These groups can gradually be networked with each other to build a full fledged community organization for development.

So, for example, a single mothers group, an elders group, a youth group, a group interested in promoting economic development, and a group interested in better health could all potentially become core groups of a community development process. The key to this happening is that the group members must see the connection between their personal concerns and the well-being of a whole community. Because everything is connected to everything else in human development processes, to work for the improvement of any one aspect of life is work for general improvement. It therefore is reasonable to gradually enlist the co-operation and

support of seemingly isolated and distinct interest groups for one another's causes.

The ideal core groups would be made up of representatives of all the major factions and interest groups in the community. Core group members would view their particpation in the group as a non-political (in the partisan sense), human-development promoting activity. Gradually the group would articulate a vision of "where we have been and where we are going" and would conspire to support one another in transforming their personal spheres of influence so that their vision could become reality.

Core groups development is a model on a small scale of the larger community development process. All the aspects represented on the wheel of development (fig. I) for communities are also true of core groups within communities. Guiding core group development is probably the most critical of tasks community development workers perform. The core group needs, first of all, to educate itself and to become inspired to new heights of commitment. The process of dialogue, workshop, and action research that constitutes its growth are, in themselves, like seeds growing in the womb of the community. As the core group develops, becoming more influential, more clear in its direction, and more able to cluster others around it, the entire community development process grows and matures. The principal collective actor in

the community development process is the core group (or groups). It is this group that dreams, decides, plans, acts, evaluates and builds an organization to formalize and sustain its efforts.

7. Making Plans and Goals

The critical community development planning question is, "Who will make the plans and who will carry them out?" All too often well-meaning planners contrive plans for others to carry out. When these others do not somehow conform to the plans, there is tendency to blame and label. The community is "indifferent", "apathetic", and "lacking in commitment" are typical accusations.

Generally, the best plans are those that are made in collaboration with the ones who are supposed to do the plan. This type almost always gets done. It is crucial that the intended beneficiaries of programs, plans and goals participate in the designing of those programs and the choosing of those goals.

8. Building Community Organization

This phase of the process refers to the establishment of a formal organization, the aims of which are to sustain and continue to develop the ideals, the vision, and the objectives of the core group(s). The importance of giving staying power to the successful community innovations cannot

My objective is to get those of my people that have strayed away from our traditions, like I myself once did, to understand and come back. It's not easy. I suspect this is the problem with Indian people everywhere. We have to sit down with each other within our own communities. We have to reconcile the factions that exist. We have to tell those people who just want money or glory for themselves that they must think of the nation first. We have to sit down and speak the truth to each other, and make a peace amongst each other. That peace will bring unity and with unity there is strength, and with strength we can start assuming control over our own affairs.

Andrew Delisle (Mohawk)

be overestimated. It is often important to transfer commitment, vision, and enthusiasm from a few dedicated volunteers to an organization which can sustain the new directions without danger of burnout. An organization can:

a) attract diverse support for the project;

b) obtain funds;

c) engage full time professional to work on the project;

d) be a tangible symbol of the process of change and a rallying point to focus human energy for change in the community.

9. Building Unity Between Hearts and Minds

The foundation of any successful human development process is the unity of the hearts and minds of the participants in that process. There is no community or organization that is not burdened to some degree with jealousies, and petty strife. These symptoms of disunity can be like a killing cancer to a human development process. In some communities certain families have been antagonistic toward each other for years. Sometimes there are big egos and conflicting interests to contend with.

The transcending of these differences in pursuit of a common vision is a vital aspect of community development. Facilitating this healing process is an often difficult and sensitive aspect of community development work. It is almost always helpful to look to the spiritual core of the culture

for assistance in healing these hurts and removing the personal obstacles to development.

10. Learning

In any human developemnt process, the people must get to know, make sense of, and creatively interact with new aspects of reality. This they must do in ways that promote their well-being and their continued development.

When viewed from the perspective of what developing people are experiencing. the entire development process may be seen as a great learning enterprise. Every aspect of it facilitates human learning.

Specifically however, learning inputs are often needed in a community development process. Through intentionally structured experiences, and through guided reflection on the process of change as it is underway, people need to learn a great deal about themselves, their environment, the community, or the wide world. They will need to develop skills and to acquire the use of technologies previously unknown to them in order to meet their goals. It is often useful to have outside help in facilitating learning experiences for development, but there is also a great deal ordinary people can learn on their own. Perhaps the most effective catalyzer of self-learning is encouragement.

11. Taking Action

Action in this context can mean anything from sharing concerns with friends and neighbors to putting full-fledged plans into operation. Some action is organized and structured, and some is informal.

However, not every step taken in the vague hope of realizing goals or actualizing a shared vision may be considered a true development action. Development-oriented action is intentional, purposeful action arising out of careful reflection on the circumstance of one's life or community and a commitment to transform it.

12. Evaluation

Evaluation is the process of finding out what the actual circumstances or conditions are that are central to the focus of a development process. Have the actions we have taken in fact met our objectives? Are our objectives still adequate in light of what we have learned through our action?

Often evaluation is a good entry point into a development process. For example, the Alexander Indian Band, near Morinville, Alberta conducted an evaluation of their school system. The evaluation process led to band take-over of the school, and today, the Alexander School is considered by educators to be one of the most promising education experiments in the country. Incidentally, the Alexander Band

won a National Canadian Community Development Award (1983) in recognition of the strength and success of their project.

Some final thoughts

It is important to realize that a living development process never works the way our models picture them to work. Always there are new variations, and the combination of several or many of the twelve factors listed in the above model of community development will create a completely unanticipated result.

Still, a model of the development process is a very useful planning and evaluation tool. If everything in our community program seems to be coming unglued, it may help to check the model to see what ingredients could be missing. For example, if we have forgotten to consult key individuals, or if we have neglected the fundamental tasks of building unity or establishing a vision, it is very likely that our program will soon be in difficulty.

The model is only a tool for focusing thought and action for development. We invite you to examine your own community, using this tool, as well as common sense (which is necessary for using any tool) to determine what inputs are needed to enhance the human and community development process.

Begin, in your analysis, with that part of the community

you know best (the family, the elders, the school, the economy). It doesn't really matter where you begin, because you will soon find that everything is connected and related to everything else. The important thing is to begin.

Note: The next discussion paper (number 9) includes some practical exercises you can do to help to look at your community in terms of its positive growth and development.

Questions to think about:

1. Think about one of the problems your community faces in terms of the steps in the Four World's model of community development:

    a. What is the tension or problem?

    b. What kind of learning will help you understand the community better so you can find a solution to the problem?

    c. What are some of the goals or objectives you could set to solve the problem?

    d. What are some of the skills and knowledge you will need to learn to carry out your proposed solution to the problem?

    e. What action is required to implement your solution to the problem?

    f. How will you be able to evaluate the success of your plan?

    g. How will you use your evaluation to identify new problems that will require more learning

and further action?

2. Think about one of your past attempts to help your community. How successful were they? If they were not very successful, analyze them in terms of the above model. Which steps did you leave out? Can you use your evaluation of your past efforts to begin the cycle of community development?

Reading List:

1. Christensen, John D. Inupiat Ilitqusiat: To Save Our Land and Our People, NANA Regional Corporation, P.O. Box 49, Kotzebue, Alaska, U.S.A. 99752.

2. Hall, Budd L. and J. Roby Kidd. Adult Learning: A Design for Action, Peragamon Press, Toronto, 1978.

3. Macy, Joanna. Dharma and Development, Kumarian Press, West Hartford, Connecticut, 1983.

4. Roberts, Hayden. Community Development: Learning and Action, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1979.